

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, dependent claims 22 and 23 are added to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, page 51, lines 18-21.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner Bui for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the March 14, 2007 personal interview. The substance of the personal interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No 5,274,700 to Gechter et al. ("Gechter"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Gechter discloses all elements recited in the claims. However, Gechter does not disclose or suggest "an audio relay unit that relays audio signals between the ... first and second parties ... after the lines to the ... first and second parties are connected," as recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claims 20 and 21.

Gechter discloses a call router 18 that selects an agent station to answer an incoming call. See Figs. 2 and 5; col. 12, lines 3-14; and col. 13, line 35-col. 14, line 25. Gechter discloses that, after an agent station is connected to the incoming call, call router 18 drops out of the connection. See col. 12, lines 3-14; and col. 14, lines 19-25. Gechter does not disclose or suggest relaying audio signals between the incoming call and the agent station after the connection between the incoming call and the agent station is established.

Furthermore, Gechter does not disclose a telephone terminal equipment that relays the audio signals, as recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claims 20 and 21. As discussed above, Gechter only discloses a call router 18 that selects an agent station to answer an incoming call. The call router 18 is not a telephone terminal equipment. Thus, the call router 18 does not disclose or suggest the telephone terminal equipment recited in the claims.

Thus, Gechter does not disclose or suggest each and every element recited in claim 1, similarly recited in claims 20 and 21, and recited in claims 2-19 depending therefrom.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

New claims 22 and 23 are each patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1, from they depend, as well as for additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

Amendment Transmittal
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: March 20, 2007

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